



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476
Phone: 781-316-3000

webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us

Minutes 04/11/2006

**THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 2006**

Superintendent: Nate Levenson
Asst. Supt.: Kevin Hutchinson
Sp. Ed. Director: Barbara Cataldo
Student Rep: EJ Harris

Ms. Sheffler called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm. Ms. Sheffler stated that as chair she hopes to conduct a respectful and orderly meeting style; best practices state that no regular meeting has much utility after 2 hours and so will endeavor to fairly and equitably finish the business of the school committee by 9:30. Sue asks for cooperation where possible. Sean Garballey is at the podium of the UN taking part of an international model UN program. Ms. Sheffler reminded the Committee that we would continue to focus on the 5 district goals:

1. Implement Special Education and English Language Learners reforms per Coordinated Program Review.
2. Implement essential standards and common assessments in math, reading, writing, science, and social studies in K-12 to build upon the foundation of our standards based education and common curriculum.
3. Provide highly effective and focused professional development.
4. Determine what content knowledge, skills, and “habits of mind” will best prepare our students for the 21st century.
5. Create a transparent, simple-to-understand budget, which provides both line item and programmatic detail.

Ms. Sheffler noted that the school committee did vote bottom line budget to send to Town Meeting for approval, but that the details of the budget are still very much a work in progress.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

“Miriam Stein, an Arlington resident, former APS parent, member of the Supt. Diversity Advisory Committee, Vision 2020 and a Jewish resident, urged the school committee to find a time other than Saturday the Jewish Sabbath, to hold the AHS graduation.

Sherry Han- APS parent, made note of the fact that the junior prom was originally scheduled on Good Friday and that it still appears on the school website; Ms. Han objects to the proposed calendar for next year and asked the school committee to rethink the AHS graduation on a Saturday. Her family members would be unable to attend due to the observance of the Sabbath.

Consent Agenda All items listed with an asterisk (*) are considered to be

routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the Committee so requests, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence.

**Approval of warrant #06132 in the amount of \$473,669.13*

* Authorization of New Chair to sign Payroll Warrant (Policy DGA) (removed per Mr. Thrope's request)

**Approval of Subcommittee Assignments (removed per Mr. Thielman's request)*

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was

Voted to approve the remaining items on the Consent Agenda (warrant) as presented. Unanimous vote 6-0

The authorization of the new chair to sign the payroll warrant per policy DGA was moved by Mr. Schlichtman with a second by Ms. Lovelace. After discussion the Committee voted 5-1 (Mr. Thrope with a no vote)

Mr. Thrope offered the following amendment with a second by Mr. Thielman: provided that the chair is expressly not authorized

to sign blank payroll warrants. Mr. Thrope noted that although signing the blank warrant has been routine in the past, he believes that it is poor practice. 1-5 motion fails

Ms. Sheffler informed the Committee that any member may check the payroll records at any time; the purpose of signing blank warrants is nothing except administrative; it does not take away the chairs' responsibility to review the payroll warrants and the ability of any other member to go and review payroll warrants.

Mr. Schlichtman seconded by Mr. Thielman it was

.. Voted to refer the issue of reporting unusual expenditures on the payroll to the budget subcommittee. Unanimous 6-0.

.. On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. Owayda it was unanimously

Voted to approve the 2006-2007 subcommittee and assignments. 6-0.

Mr. Thielman did note that although subcommittee tasks outlines some issues that may be addressed during the year, it is by no means an exhaustive list, and pointed out that we are bound by policy on each of the subcommittees.

Paul Schlichtman withdrew his name as Selectmen Liaison for the purpose of allowing Mr. Garballey to fill the slot if he so desires. Mr. Thrope noted that under the Infrastructure Working Group the sc is allowed only 1 representative. Mr. Thielman and Ms. Sheffler withdrew their names and Mr. Thrope agreed to serve as the school committee representative on the Infrastructure Working Group.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Supt. Levenson reported that the House Ways and Means budget has come out and its not as good as we expected or hoped for. There is a reduction in Chapter 70 funding compared to the governor's budget and what we have been building our budget on (unchanged we would see a \$200,000 reduction) it would be good to contact our representatives to express our dissatisfaction.

STAND FOR CHILDREN RALLY ENDORSEMENT

Ms. Owayda reported that STAND is a national organization with state and regional chapters that advocates funding and programs for children. Ms. Owayda invited sc members and the Arlington community to join the STAND for Children Funding Rally that will take place on Wednesday, April 26th from 12:30 – 1:30 at the State House. The MASC 'Day on the Hill' is also on that day.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman seconded by Ms. Owayda it was

Voted that the Arlington School Committee endorse the STAND for Children and formally encourage residents in the Town of Arlington to participate. 6-0.

Concession Stand Update

Supt. reported that as the effort begins to expand the concession stand and with private fundraising likely, key questions must be answered, such as: who can use the stand, who gets the profit from the stand, who will pay to maintain the stand should be decided before fundraising begins. Mr. Levenson requested that the appropriate subcommittee review the situation, layout ground rules for use, revenue steam, maintenance and other related issues with the new concession stand so that no one is raising money under false expectations.

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. Schlichtman it was

Voted to refer the review of the concession stand use (layout ground rules for use, revenue steam, maintenance and other related issues) with ample input from the various sports user groups, and to report back to the full committee by May 15th Unanimous vote 6-0.

.. **Diversity outreach and hiring initiative** - Supt Levenson along with Kevin Hutchinson, Steve Pereira and a member of the diversity advisory committee attended the AARC recruitment fair. Nate stated that they have identified a number of qualified candidates and have already begun an interview process.

Chief Financial Officer –Supt. Levenson reported that the screening committee brought forth two finalists for the CFO position. Nate met with both candidates, did background and behind the scene reference checking and would like to bring Susan Mazzarella as APS' new CFO. Ms. Mazzarella has 5 years as business manager in Lynnfield Public Schools and 10 years in the private sector. She brings school business experience but also brings two other important areas: first as a previous director of human resources and second, high level management information systems. Mr. Levenson requested school committee approval for a start date of May 1, 2006.

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was

Voted to approve Susan Mazzarella as Chief Finical Officer of Arlington Public Schools as presented by Superintendent Levenson effective May 1, 2006. 5-1 Mr. Thrope with a no vote.

Mr. Thrope expressed reservations that the candidate does not bring enough school experience to the central office. (nothing about the candidate or her merit)

Nate emphasized that he has great confidence in Ms. Mazzarella's 5 years in the central school office and her prior 10 years

experience in business.

.. Prevention Leadership Team Report

Cindy Bouvier, AHS Health Coordinator, gave a report on the events that have taken place since the death of an Arlington High School student.

- .. There was not a large scale assembly for students, under the advisement of experts in the field.
- .. Administrative support consisted of communication with all staff and updates on the situation; Dr. Kerzner spoke at the next full faculty meeting and facilitated a 5 week follow for staff.
- .. On going support to students by the guidance department, staff and Liz Witco from the Samaritans.
- .. Immediate collaboration of planning with the local police, local mental health agencies, school administration, the Samaritans and faith group representation.
- .. A parent forum was held on March 9th that was attended by approximately 200 parents
- .. The school nurses updated the parent/student resource booklet to be published online this spring.

The Executive Committee was formed to map out a direction for building a coalition consisting of: The Town Manager, Director of the Board of Health, Human Resource Director, the Superintendent, the AHS Principal, the Chief of Police, the Health Coordinator and the AYCC Director. This committee was then expanded to a group of 20 that included participants from the greater community.

The group will meet to accomplish a common language and understanding of the approach it will choose to take. The next steps are to share perspectives, discuss the current reality and ideals, create a vision of community and strategies on how to get there and to research best practices.

Supt. Levenson noted that Christine Connolly and Patsy Kramer are co-chairs of the committee; meetings will take place at the Whittemore Robbins House which will help to expand it beyond the schools and make it a community effort.

.. All Day Kindergarten

Supt. Levenson reported on the collection of ADK tuition. We have collected 93% of the funds due. Nate explained that the philosophy (payment in advance) and collection issue may need to be addressed at the subcommittee level. The Supt. noted that the actual management of the collections and billing is a dispersed process between 3-4 staff along with the 7 elementary principals; it is his intent to centralize the entire process under the CFO.

.. Approval of Job Descriptions

Mr. Levenson explained that all staff affected by leadership changes were involved in the proposed job descriptions and met with either Charlie Skidmore or Kevin Hutchinson. A few job descriptions are still being developed.

The Committee discussed the different job descriptions, it was agreed to amend the reading coach responsibilities by adding, "Experience or demonstrated ability in coaching and mentoring".

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was unanimously

Voted to approve the job descriptions presented with the amendment to the reading coach (the addition of "experience or demonstrated ability in coaching and mentoring")

.. Approval of School Calendar

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman seconded by Ms. Owayda it was unanimously

Voted to postpone discussion of the 2006-2007 school calendar to the May 9th school committee meeting.

.. ASCD Conference next meeting

THIRD QUARTERLY REPORT OF ELL/SPED

Supt. Levenson reported that approximately 50% of the Special Education action steps have been completed and nearly all the ELL action steps have been completed. Nate anticipates that 80% of the action items will be completed before the end of school and half of the balance will be finished over the summer.

The Superintendent stated that he is thrilled with the accomplishments in the ELL Program under the direction of Jill McCarthy; the hard work and real results are outstanding.

Jill McCarthy reviewed the ELL Program Corrective Action Plan Status Report, highlighting the successes of and challenges to the district and to its ELE program. Ms. McCarthy explained that this year has focused on data and procedures for accurate identification and instructional leveling at three critical points: those ELL students moving from grade 8 to high school 9 for Fall 2006, those students moving from grade 5 to middle school, and those language-other-than-English students entering kindergarten in Fall 2006. By maintaining and building on a consistent baseline, we will be able to build "data trails" for each student and communicate his/her progress clearly to all stakeholders as well as provide more focused instruction.

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was

Voted to approve the Massachusetts Department of Education General Laws 71A School District Program Waivers for English Learners. 6-0.

Supt. Levenson reported that we can be proud of how much has been accomplished by the Special Education Department even though we will not be 100% on schedule (the original plan gave 3 years and then was reduced to 7 months).

Ms. Cataldo gave an update on the items accomplished on the Corrective Action Plan, items accomplished not in the Corrective Action Plan and things that still need to be done.

GOAL REVIEW – SUPT. MERIT ADJUSTMENT next meeting

APPOINTMENT OF SC REPRESENTATIVE TO VISION 2020

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. Owayda it was unanimously

Voted to appoint Josh Lobel as the school committee representative on the Vision 2020 Task Force.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Owayda reported that 16 AHS students took the National Math Exam.

The letter from Physical Education Director Kate Cremens-Basbas was referred to the curriculum, instruction and assessment subcommittee.

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was

Voted to enter executive session for the purpose of negotiations with no further business to be conducted upon return to open session except to adjourn. Roll Call:

EXECUTIVE SESSION 9:40 – 9:50 pm

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman seconded by Ms. Owayda it was unanimously

Voted to adjourn @ 9:50 pm. 6-0.

Submitted by

Karen Tassone

Committee Secretary